

# CITY OF IDAHO CITY, IDAHO PWS # 4080025 SOURCE WATER ASSESSMENT REPORT

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**DATE: November 20, 2000**



## **State of Idaho Department of Environmental Quality**

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## Executive Summary

Under the Safe Drinking Water Act Amendments of 1996, all states are required by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to assess every source of public drinking water for its relative sensitivity to contaminants regulated by the Act. This assessment is based on a land use inventory of the designated assessment area and sensitivity factors associated with the watershed characteristics.

This report, *Source Water Assessment for the Idaho City Water Department, Idaho*, describes the public drinking water system, the zone boundary of water contribution, and the associated potential contaminant sources located within this boundary. This assessment should be used as a planning tool, taken into account with local knowledge and concerns, to develop and implement appropriate protection measures for this source. **The results should not be used as an absolute measure of risk and they should not be used to undermine public confidence in the water system.**

The Idaho City Water Department drinking water system consists of one surface water intake structure in Elk Creek, northwest of the city.

The primary water quality issue currently facing the Idaho City Water Department is the amount of mine/prospect locations within and around the delineated area and the potential of inorganic chemicals associated with such activities.

Another water quality issue currently facing the Idaho City Water Department and of most surface water systems is bacterial contamination and the problems associated with managing it.

This assessment should be used as a basis for determining appropriate new protection measures or re-evaluating existing protection efforts. No matter what ranking a source receives, protection is always important. Whether the source is currently located in a “pristine” area or an area with numerous industrial and/or agricultural land uses, the way to ensure good water quality in the future is to act now to protect valuable water supply resources.

Due to the fairly short time associated with the movement of surface waters, source water protection activities should be aimed at short-term management strategies with the development of long-term management strategies to counter any future contamination threats. Source water protection activities should be coordinated with federal, state and local agencies.

A community with a fully developed source water protection program will incorporate many strategies. For assistance in developing protection strategies please contact your regional IDEQ office or the Idaho Rural Water Association.

# SOURCE WATER ASSESSMENT FOR IDAHO CITY, IDAHO

## Section 1. Introduction - Basis for Assessment

The following sections contain information necessary to understand how and why this assessment was conducted. **It is important to review this information to understand what the ranking of this source means.** A map showing the delineated source water assessment area, map showing the entire watershed contributing to the delineated area and the inventory of significant potential sources of contamination identified within the delineated area is attached. The list of significant potential contaminant source categories and their rankings used to develop the assessment also is attached.

### Background

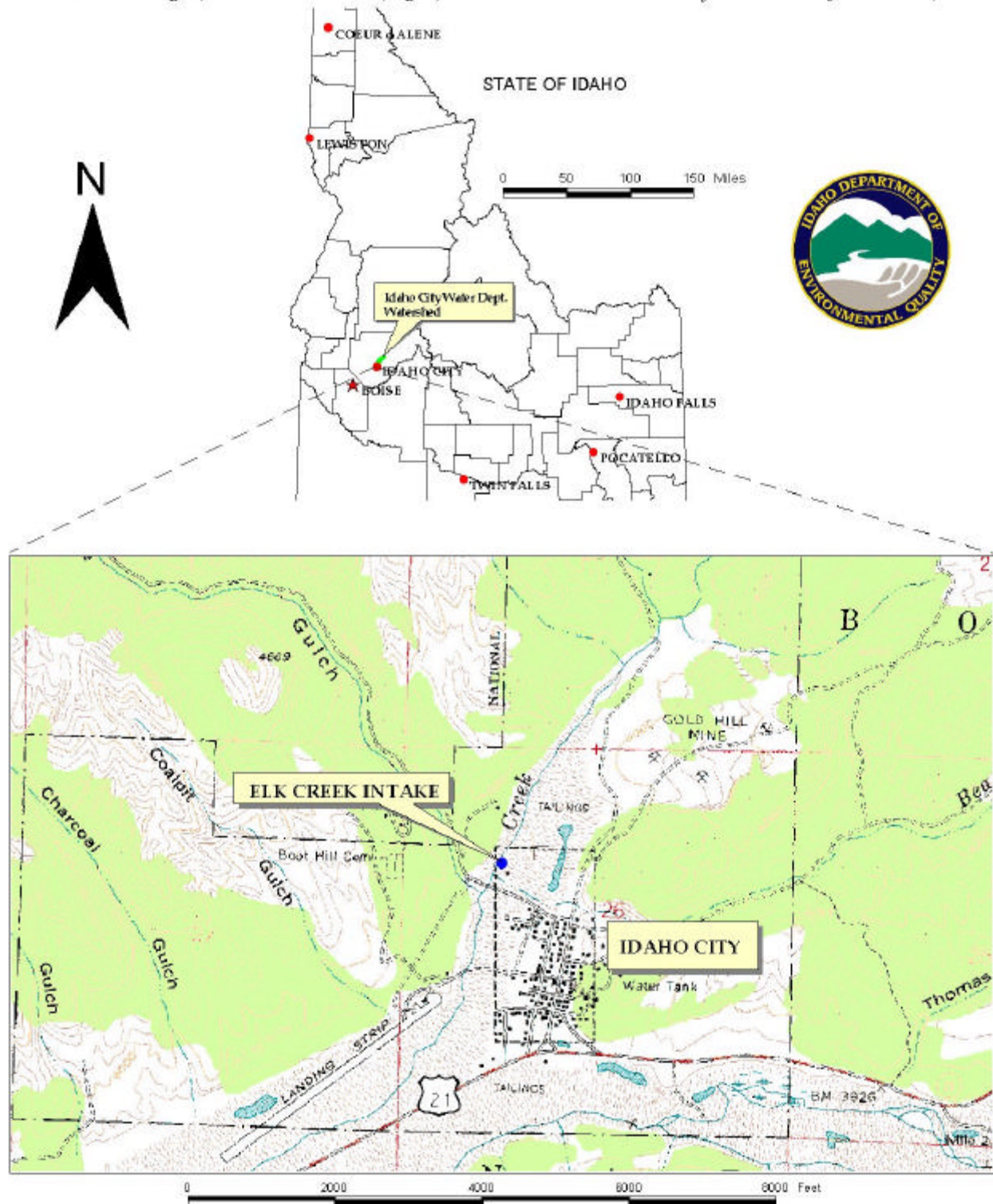
Under the Safe Drinking Water Act Amendments of 1996, all states are required by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to assess every source of public drinking water for its relative susceptibility to contaminants regulated by the Safe Drinking Water Act. This assessment is based on a land use inventory of the delineated assessment area and sensitivity factors associated with the intakes and watershed characteristics.

### Level of Accuracy and Purpose of the Assessment

There are over 2,900 public water sources in Idaho that must be completed by May of 2003. An in-depth, site-specific investigation of each significant potential source of contamination is not possible. **Therefore, this assessment should be used as a planning tool, taken into account with local knowledge and concerns, to develop and implement appropriate protection measures for this source. The results should not be used as an absolute measure of risk and they should not be used to undermine public confidence in the water system.**

The ultimate goal of the assessment is to provide data to local communities to develop a protection strategy for their drinking water supply system. The Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (IDEQ) recognizes that pollution prevention activities generally require less time and money to implement than treatment of a public water supply system once it has been contaminated. IDEQ encourages communities to balance resource protection with economic growth and development. The decision as to the amount and types of information necessary to develop a source water protection program should be determined by the local community based on its own needs and limitations. Source water protection is one facet of a comprehensive growth plan, and it can complement ongoing local planning efforts.

FIGURE 1. Geographic Location & Topographic Watershed Delineation for Idaho City Water Dept.



## **Section 2. Conducting the Assessment**

### **General Description of the Source Water Quality**

Idaho City, Idaho is a community of approximately 397 people, located approximately 38 miles northeast of Boise (Figure 1). The public drinking water system for Idaho City Water Department is comprised of one drinking water intake in Elk Creek, near the Slaughterhouse Gulch road crossing.

The primary water quality issue currently facing Idaho City Water Department is the amount of historic mining activity within and around the delineated area.

Another quality issue currently facing the Idaho City Water Department and similar surface water systems is that of possible bacterial contamination and the problems associated with managing it. Surface water systems in general are vulnerable to microbial bacteria contamination.

### **Defining the Zones of Contribution--Delineation**

To protect surface water systems from such potential contaminant pathways, the EPA required that the entire drainage basin be delineated upstream from the intake to the hydrologic boundary of the drainage basin (U.S. EPA, 1997b). The EPA recognized that an intake on a large water body could have an extensive drainage basin. Therefore, the EPA recommended that large drainage basins be segmented into smaller areas for the purpose of implementing a cost-effective potential contaminant inventory and susceptibility analysis. The delineation process established the physical area around an intake that became the focal point of the assessment. The process included mapping the boundaries of the zone of contribution into a buffer zone, which extends 500 ft. from either side of the stream, capturing stream reaches and tributaries to 25 miles or to extent of the watershed boundary.

The delineated source water assessment area for the Idaho City Water Department can best be described as Elk Creek surrounded by a 500 foot buffer along the stream banks, extending upstream to include tributaries and stream reaches within the watershed (See Figure 2). The delineated area covers roughly 5,106 acres in area. The actual data used by IDEQ in determining the source water assessment delineation is available upon request.

In addition to the source water delineation a 24-hour emergency response delineation to facilitate emergency-response activities is to be provided for larger rivers and streams. If a potential contaminant spills directly into a water body, the drinking water utility needs appropriate notification in order to turn off an intake, or switch to an alternative source. For each river or stream intake, the upstream emergency-response distance was calculated from the 24-hour stream flow time-of-travel. In the case for the Idaho City Water Department, the 24-hour emergency response is considered to be within the existing delineation, which is confined to the watershed boundary of Elk Creek.

## Identifying Potential Sources of Contamination

A potential source of contamination is defined as any facility or activity that stores, uses, or produces, as a product or by-product, the contaminants regulated under the Safe Drinking Water Act and has a sufficient likelihood of releasing such contaminants at levels that could pose a concern relative to the drinking water sources. The goal of the inventory process is to locate and describe those facilities, land uses, and environmental conditions that are potential sources of surface water contamination. The locations of potential sources of contamination within the delineation areas were obtained by field surveys conducted by IDEQ and from available databases.

Land use within the Idaho City Water Department source water delineated area is mostly forested with residential and seasonal homes, small businesses and historic mine workings. Homes and businesses within the delineated area operate with individual septic systems.

It is important to understand that a release may never occur from a potential source of contamination provided they are using best management practices. Many potential sources of contamination are regulated at the federal level, state level, or both to reduce the risk of release. Therefore, when a business, facility, or property is identified as a potential contaminant source, this should not be interpreted to mean that this business, facility, or property is in violation of any local, state, or federal environmental law or regulation. What it does mean is that the potential for contamination exists due to the nature of the business, industry, or operation. There are a number of methods that water systems can use to work cooperatively with potential sources of contamination. These involve educational visits and inspections of stored materials. Many owners of such facilities may not even be aware that they are located near a public water supply intake.

## Contaminant Source Inventory Process

The process involved identifying and documenting potential contaminant sources within the Idaho City Water Department Source Water Assessment Area through the use of computer databases and Geographic Information System (GIS) maps developed by IDEQ. A map showing the delineated area with the potential contaminant sources is included (Figure 2).

A total of 22 potential contaminant sites are located within the delineated source water area (see Table 1). The potential contaminant sources within delineated source water areas are located several miles upstream and consist of mine/prospect workings.

Potential contaminants of concern consist of inorganic contaminants related to mining activities. Table 1 lists the potential contaminants of concern and information source. Synthetic and volatile organic chemical compounds are possible contaminants that may be related to equipment used in operations. It should be noted that some of the mining related features may be historic and of minor significance.

**Table 1. Idaho City Water Department Potential Contaminant Inventory**

SITE #	Source Description	Source of Information	Potential Contaminants
1	MINE/PROSPECT	Database Search	IOC.VOC, SOC
2	MINE/PROSPECT	Database Search	IOC.VOC, SOC
3	MINE/PROSPECT	Database Search	IOC.VOC, SOC
4	MINE/PROSPECT	Database Search	IOC.VOC, SOC
5	MINE/PROSPECT	Database Search	IOC.VOC, SOC
6	MINE/PROSPECT	Database Search	IOC.VOC, SOC
7	MINE/PROSPECT	Database Search	IOC.VOC, SOC
8	MINE/PROSPECT	Database Search	IOC.VOC, SOC
9	MINE/PROSPECT	Database Search	IOC.VOC, SOC
10	MINE/PROSPECT	Database Search	IOC.VOC, SOC
11	MINE/PROSPECT	Database Search	IOC.VOC, SOC
12	MINE/PROSPECT	Database Search	IOC.VOC, SOC
13	MINE/PROSPECT	Database Search	IOC.VOC, SOC
14	MINE/PROSPECT	Database Search	IOC.VOC, SOC
15	MINE/PROSPECT	Database Search	IOC.VOC, SOC
16	MINE/PROSPECT	Database Search	IOC.VOC, SOC
17	MINE/PROSPECT	Database Search	IOC.VOC, SOC
18	MINE/PROSPECT	Database Search	IOC.VOC, SOC
19	MINE/PROSPECT	Database Search	IOC.VOC, SOC
20	MINE/PROSPECT	Database Search	IOC.VOC, SOC
21	MINE/PROSPECT	Database Search	IOC.VOC, SOC
22	MINE/PROSPECT	Database Search	IOC, VOC, SOC

**IOC = inorganic chemical, VOC = volatile organic chemical, SOC = synthetic organic chemical, M = Microbial**

## Susceptibility Analyses

The susceptibility of the source water system was ranked as high, moderate, or low risk according to the following considerations: hydrologic characteristics, physical integrity and construction of the intake, land use characteristic, and potentially significant contaminant sources. The susceptibility rankings are specific to a particular potential contaminant or category of contaminants. Therefore, a high susceptibility rating relative to one potential contaminant does not mean that the water system is at the same risk for all other potential contaminants. The relative ranking that is derived for each intake is a qualitative, screening-level step that, in many cases, uses generalized assumptions and best professional judgement. The following summaries describe the rationale for the susceptibility ranking.

### Intake Construction

The construction of the public water system intake can affect the ability of the intake to protect the drinking water source from contaminants. The Idaho City Water Department drinking water system consists of one intake that produces surface water for domestic and business use. The intake for the Idaho City Water Department is located in Elk Creek, upstream from the crossing of Slaughterhouse Gulch Road. Intake system construction scores were rated low.

## **Potential Contaminant Source and Land Use**

The Elk Creek water source for the Idaho City Water Department is rated moderate in susceptibility overall due to the presence of potential contaminant sources within the delineated area. The source has experienced detections of some IOC contaminants, however none of the detections have exceeded Safe Drinking Water Act Maximum Contaminant Levels.

Land use within the delineated area for the Idaho City Water Supply Department consists of residential homes, historic mine workings and recreational sites. Homes operate with individual septic systems.

In terms of the total susceptibility score, it can be seen from Table 2 that individually the contaminant classes range from low to moderate. The source rates in the low category for the volatile organic chemical, synthetic organic chemical classes, and in the moderate category for inorganic chemicals and microbial bacteria.

**Table 2. Summary of Idaho City Water Department Susceptibility Evaluation**

Table 2. Summary of Idaho City Water Dept.	Contaminant Inventory				System Construction	Final Susceptibility Ranking			
	IOC	VOC	SOC	Microbial		IOC	VOC	SOC	Microbial
Elk Creek	M	L	L	M	L	M	L	L	M

H = High Susceptibility, M = Moderate Susceptibility, L = Low Susceptibility

IOC = inorganic chemical, VOC = volatile organic chemical, SOC = synthetic organic chemical

H\* - Indicates source automatically scored as high susceptibility due to presence of either a VOC, SOC, or Microbial contaminant in the finished drinking water

## **Susceptibility Summary**

The Idaho City Water Department drinking water system is moderately susceptible to inorganic chemicals due to the presence of potential contaminant sources present within the delineated area. The system also rates moderate for microbial contamination. Surface water systems vulnerable to microbial contamination in general and treatment is extremely important.



### **Section 3. Options for Source Water Protection**

The susceptibility assessment should be used as a basis for determining appropriate new protection measures or re-evaluating existing protection efforts. No matter what the susceptibility ranking a source receives, protection is always important. Whether the source is currently located in a “pristine” area or an area with numerous industrial and/or agricultural land uses that require education and surveillance, the way to ensure good water quality in the future is to act now to protect valuable water supply resources.

An effective source water protection program is tailored to the particular local source water protection area. A community with a fully developed source water protection program will incorporate many strategies. For Idaho City, source water protection activities should focus on environmental education with the recreational users, residents and activities within the vicinity of the Elk Creek Watershed. Future planning efforts to reduce land uses that present a potential threat to the drinking water sources, particularly those in close proximity to the intakes should be considered. Most of the delineated areas are outside the direct jurisdiction of Idaho City. Due to the relatively short time involved with the movement of surface water, source water protection activities should be aimed at short-term management strategies with an emphasis on dealing with long-term future impacts from these same sources. Source water protection activities can be coordinated with the Idaho Department of Lands, the U.S. Forest Service, and other government agencies with lands and jurisdiction within the delineated source water area.

While the surface water sources possess adequate quality and yield, limitations and vulnerability related to the construction of the intakes should be reviewed. An investigation of the feasibility of a shift to potential ground water sources to augment or replace the current surface water system should be considered.

## **Assistance**

Public water supplies and others may call the following IDEQ offices with questions about this assessment and to request assistance with developing and implementing a local protection plan. In addition, draft protection plans may be submitted to the IDEQ office for preliminary review and comments.

Boise Regional IDEQ Office                      (208) 373-0550

State IDEQ Office                                      (208) 373-0502

Website: <http://www2.state.id.us/deq>

## References Cited

EPA (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency), 1997, State Methods for Delineating Source Water Protection Areas for Surface Water Supplied Sources of Drinking Water, EPA 816-R-97-008, 40p.

Great Lakes-Upper Mississippi River Board of State and Provincial Public Health and Environmental Managers, 1997, "Recommended Standards for Water Works"

Idaho Department of Water Resources, 1993. Administrative Rules of the Idaho Water Resource Board: Well Construction Standards Rules. IDAPA 37.03.09.

Idaho Department of Environmental Quality, 1997. Design Standards for Public Drinking Water Systems. IDAPA 58.01.08.550.01.

Idaho Dept. of Environmental Quality, 1999, Idaho Source Water Assessment Plan

Howarth, Rob, 1996, Ground Water Quality Technical Report No. 7, An Evaluation of Bacteria in Ground Water Near Mountain Home, Elmore County, Idaho, Idaho Division of Environmental Quality, Southwest Idaho Regional Office

U.S. Government Printing Office, 1995, Code of Federal Regulations, 40 CFR 112, Appendix C-III, Calculation of the Planning Distance

## Attachment A

# Idaho City Water Department Susceptibility Analysis Worksheet

The final scores for the susceptibility analysis were determined from the addition of the Potential Contaminant Source/Land Use Score and Source Construction Score.

Final Susceptibility Scoring:

0 - 7    Low Susceptibility

8 - 15   Moderate Susceptibility

> 16    High Susceptibility

## Surface Water Susceptibility Report

Public Water System Name :

IDAHO CITY WATER DEPT

Intake : ELK CREEK

Public Water System Number

4080025

9/25/00 9:23:53 AM

## 1. System Construction

SCORE

Intake structure properly constructed

YES

0

Infiltration gallery or well  
under the direct influence of Surface Water

YES

0

Total System Construction Score

0

## 2. Potential Contaminant Source / Land Use

IOC  
ScoreVOC  
ScoreSOC  
ScoreMicrobial  
Score

Predominant land use type (land use or cover)

BASALT FLOW, UNDEVELOPED, OTHER

0

0

0

0

Farm chemical use high

NO

0

0

0

Significant contaminant sources \*

NO

Sources of class II or III contaminants or microbials present within the 500' of the intake and the

4

0

0

4

Agricultural lands within 500 feet

NO

0

0

0

0

Three or more contaminant sources

YES

1

1

1

1

Sources of turbidity in the watershed

NO

0

0

0

0

Total Potential Contaminant Source / Land Use Score

9

1

1

9

## 3. Final Susceptibility Source Score

9

1

1

9

## 4. Final Source Ranking

Moderate

Low

Low

Moderate

\* Special consideration due to significant contaminant sources  
The source water has no special susceptibility concerns

# POTENTIAL CONTAMINANT INVENTORY

## LIST OF ACRONYMS AND DEFINITIONS

**AST (Aboveground Storage Tanks)** – Sites with aboveground storage tanks.

**Business Mailing List** – This list contains potential contaminant sites identified through a yellow pages database search of standard industry codes (SIC).

**CERCLIS** – This includes sites considered for listing under the **Comprehensive Environmental Response Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA)**. CERCLA, more commonly known as **Superfund**, is designed to clean up hazardous waste sites that are on the national priority list (NPL).

**Cyanide Site** – DEQ permitted and known historical sites/facilities using cyanide.

**Dairy** – Sites included in the primary contaminant source inventory represent those facilities regulated by Idaho State Department of Agriculture (ISDA) and may range from a few head to several thousand head of milking cows.

**Deep Injection Well** – Injection wells regulated under the Idaho Department of Water Resources generally for the disposal of stormwater runoff or agricultural field drainage.

**Enhanced Inventory** – Enhanced inventory locations are potential contaminant source sites added by the water system. These can include new sites not captured during the primary contaminant inventory, or corrected locations for sites not properly located during the primary contaminant inventory. Enhanced inventory sites can also include miscellaneous sites added by the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (IDEQ) during the primary contaminant inventory.

**Floodplain** – This is a coverage of the 100-year floodplains.

**Group 1 Sites** – These are sites that show elevated levels of contaminants and are not within the priority one areas.

**Inorganic Priority Area** – Priority one areas where greater than 25% of the wells/springs show constituents higher than primary standards or other health standards.

**Landfill** – Areas of open and closed municipal and non-municipal landfills.

**LUST (Leaking Underground Storage Tank)** – Potential contaminant source sites associated with leaking underground storage tanks as regulated under RCRA.

**Mines and Quarries** – Mines and quarries permitted through the Idaho Department of Lands.)

**Nitrate Priority Area** – Area where greater than 25% of wells/springs show nitrate values above 5mg/l.

**NPDES (National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System)** – Sites with NPDES permits. The Clean Water Act requires that any discharge of a pollutant to waters of the United States from a point source must be authorized by an NPDES permit.

**Organic Priority Areas** – These are any areas where greater than 25 % of wells/springs show levels greater than 1% of the primary standard or other health standards.

**Recharge Point** – This includes active, proposed, and possible recharge sites on the Snake River Plain.

**RICRIS** – Site regulated under **Resource Conservation Recovery Act (RCRA)**. RCRA is commonly associated with the cradle to grave management approach for generation, storage, and disposal of hazardous wastes.

**SARA Tier II (Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act Tier II Facilities)** – These sites store certain types and amounts of hazardous materials and must be identified under the Community Right to Know Act.

**Toxic Release Inventory (TRI)** – The toxic release inventory list was developed as part of the Emergency Planning and Community Right to Know (Community Right to Know) Act passed in 1986. The Community Right to Know Act requires the reporting of any release of a chemical found on the TRI list.

**UST (Underground Storage Tank)** – Potential contaminant source sites associated with underground storage tanks regulated as regulated under RCRA.

**Wastewater Land Applications Sites** – These are areas where the land application of municipal or industrial wastewater is permitted by IDEQ.

**Wellheads** – These are drinking water well locations regulated under the Safe Drinking Water Act. They are not treated as potential contaminant sources.

**NOTE:** Many of the potential contaminant sources were located using a geocoding program where mailing addresses are used to locate a facility. Field verification of potential contaminant sources is an important element of an enhanced inventory.

Where possible, a list of potential contaminant sites unable to be located with geocoding will be provided to water systems to determine if the potential contaminant sources are located within the source water assessment area.